

## Senate approves State Officer Compensation Commission's recommendation to cut legislators pay

The State Officer Compensation Commission was empowered with salary decisions when the Constitution was changed in 2002. Lawmakers are only allowed to approve or reject SOCC's recommendations. The implementation of salary changes is delayed for two years, ensuring that no current legislator will have a direct say in their own wage.

Earlier this month, the SOCC voted to cut the pay by 10 percent of the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state and legislators elected in 2010.

The Senate passed a resolution to cut salaries of lawmakers and top state officials by 10 percent beginning in 2011. The approval of Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 marked one of the few times in history that the state Senate cut legislative and state officer wages.

In addition to voting for the pay reduction, I have saved more than \$213,000 in my office and committee budgets during my time in the Senate. Since joining the chamber in 2003, I have returned \$203,372 in savings from my office and staff budget and \$9,714 from my committee allocation.

As chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I want to set an example of fiscal responsibility. I am just doing my part as a legislator to reduce spending in these difficult times.

## Senate approves resolution to help homeowners

Michigan homeowners are in desperate need of relief. That's why the Michigan Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution designed to help homeowners with rising property taxes and declining home values.

Intended to moderate rising property taxes when real estate was booming, Proposal A kept property taxes in check. Before Proposal A, many elderly residents were being forced to sell the homes they had owned for years, due to skyrocketing property taxes. Proposal A's overhaul of the system allowed these long-time residents to stay in their homes.

However, the collapse of the housing market has shed light on a clear unfairness in the 1994 reform of Michigan's property tax system. The problem is that while property values have decreased, the taxable values continued to increase. The Senate resolution fixes that problem.

Senate Joint Resolution H would allow the public to vote on an amendment to the Michigan Constitution that would prevent an individual's residential property taxes from increasing from the previous year if the assessed value of their home decreased during the same period.

If a homeowner's property tax assessment actually fell below the taxable value of their home, the resolution would allow for the taxable value to decrease reflecting the lower assessment.

Constitutional amendments require two-thirds vote for passage in both the House and Senate. The resolution was approved by the Senate 29-8, and now is before the House of Representative for consideration. To be approved and placed on the ballot, SJR H must receive 74 yes votes in the House.

If approved by the House and adopted by voters in 2010, the resolution would help homeowners throughout the

state.

I will keep you updated on each of these items, and other state issues, in future columns.

I want to extend my best wishes to you and your family as many of you observe Passover and Easter.

Please visit my Web site at <u>www.SenatorNancyCassis.com</u> for the latest information and updates on issues in Lansing. Or contact me toll free at 1-888-38-NANCY.

## **Contact Information:**

The E-News Update by Senator Nancy Cassis is designed to provide residents and organizations with a periodic update of my activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact my office.

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